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THE CLAIMS OF SOCIOLOGY EXAMINED

HENRY JONES FORD

Professor Albion W. Small has generously allowed me unrestricted space in which to reply to criticisms upon my article in *The Nation* on "The Pretensions of Sociology." In his own comments Professor Small remarks that it suited me "to ignore the methodological argument." That did not come within the scope of an article which was devoted to sociological doctrine and its influence upon the popular mind, and which, as it was addressed to the general public, avoided technical nomenclature so far as possible. But I do not think it is quite true to say that I ignored the methodological argument; on the contrary I adverted to the fact that the fundamental issue was one of methodology. Professor Ellwood in his comments admits that I noted that issue. At any rate, I shall now comply with Professor Small's wishes by "meeting sociology frankly on that plane." It is a satisfaction to have a fitting occasion for argument of that character, for my antagonism to sociology is rooted in methodological considerations. It is just for the reason that the matter of methodology is so important that I have presented the issue so squarely. When definite propositions are advanced without any attempt at hedging the basis is laid for profitable controversy. If I venture to differ with sociologists as to the scientific value of their speculations, the antagonism is purely a matter of logical form and is accompanied by sincere personal respect for them. It should be remembered that I am not going out of my way to attack sociology. It proposes, as part of its scheme, that political science shall be regarded as a province of sociology. Since it confronts the student of political science with an assertion of sovereignty, surely he has a right to criticize its pretensions.

I

With this object in view, I have heretofore laid down these propositions: (1) There is not now a science of sociology. (2) There never will be, for sociology is based upon a methodological concept that is not valid. These propositions have called forth replies published in the July number of this journal which I shall now examine. They virtually concede the truth of the first proposition, for they go no farther than to claim that sociology is a science in the making, and that the difficulties it experiences in finding itself are just such in their general nature as every recognized branch of science has had to pass through in its development. But it does not follow that sociology will ever extricate itself. Scholastic systems quite as elaborate and highly classified as sociology now is, were unable to stand the strain and had to be discarded—as, for instance, alchemy and astrology. Whether or not any projected system of knowledge will endure depends not upon its purpose, nor upon the zeal of its advocates, but upon the security of its fundamental concept, and its serviceability in providing systematic accommodation for verified data. I submit, therefore, that what Professors Small and Ellwood have to say about the importance of the aims of sociology is quite beside the mark. All that might have been said of alchemy and astrology in their day of scientific pretension, but that did not save them from being discredited and rejected by the scientific world. The point at issue is not whether sociology means well, but whether it is true—true in the sense that it has a vision of reality and is not misled by appearances.

Let us consider the reasons advanced for believing that sociology has in it the making of a science. Professor Small, while contending that it is “the most impressive body of social science in the world,”¹ does not define it as a science but holds that it should be regarded as a methodological movement or endeavor. He admits that European scholarship has not taken much stock in sociology as such, but he explains this by saying that it has something just as good, and which indeed is sociology in

¹ Cf. “The Vindication of Sociology,” *Am. Jour. of Sociol.*, XV, 9.

everything but name. He makes citations showing the importance attached by German political economists to the psychology of motive, and he remarks that "they illustrate very clearly why the demand for a distinct sociological methodology has been less acute in Germany than in the English-speaking countries." It seems to me that the logic of this is that it does not matter in which direction you go so long as you know where you want to arrive. I think it matters a great deal; one cannot reach any goal unless one moves toward it. The notion that one methodology is as good as another, so long as it is addressed to the same class of problems, is to my mind a logical absurdity. The essence of scientific rank in any body of knowledge is that it methodizes the facts with which it deals, so that they are brought into their proper relations. A methodological scheme is therefore a condition precedent to any claim of scientific standing, but the claimant must stand or fall on the validity of its scheme. Professor Ellwood sees this point. He admits that the problems with which sociology proposes to deal are not new, and he adds "nor is sociology a new science except in the sense that it proposes to attack these problems by the new methods of positive science."² That is to say, it claims to be a science because it has or is acquiring a special methodology different from that of other sciences, and performing a service that they are unable to render. I have no trouble in following Professor Ellwood's argument and unreservedly admit that his case in this respect is sound in logical formulation. Sociology has its own methodological scheme and to that extent its pretensions to rank as a science are well founded. But to make good its claim its methodological scheme must be valid. It appears to me that usually in sociological literature the security of its methodological basis is regarded as obvious. Faith in the possibilities of sociology, which gives ardor to the efforts of so many sincere and industrious workers, seems to rest upon the assumption that there must needs be a province for a science construing the phenomena of human life in terms of association among individuals. They seem to think that this is too plain for argument, since it is

² Cf. "The Science of Sociology: A Reply," *Am. Jour. of Sociol.*, XV, 106.

apparent to common observation and ordinary experience that all human institutions are forms of companionship among individuals. This is the major premise of sociological dialectic. With that granted the rest follows by strict logical inference. It is historically evident that institutions vary greatly in time and space. Every age has its own pattern. Every country, every people, and indeed almost every community, in every age, has its own pattern. Therefore social phenomena are very complex. And yet since they all apparently result from individual activities, the problem of establishing sociology as a science resolves itself into the determination of categories of individual volition. The task is difficult—yea, stupendous; and yet it is well worthy of all the labor that can be bestowed upon it; because it means nothing less than attainment by humanity of the power to control the destinies of humanity. Such is the high source of the moral enthusiasm which sustains the sociologists in their futile labors and makes them patient of the present confusion that allows quacks and charlatans to figure as sociologists with as good a right as any. Hence Professor Ellwood feels justified in saying that “he who opposes sociology as such is unconsciously an enemy of mankind.”

But what if the major premise that has been mentioned is invalid? What if, in assuming that institutions may be construed as forms of human companionship, the sociologists are deceived by appearances, the truth being, as is so generally the case with scientific truth, that the reality is very different from the appearance, so that sociology is as much astray as a system of astronomy would be if based upon the apparent fact that the earth is flat. This is a point which, apparently, it does not occur to the sociologists to consider. Even if they touch upon it, they seem to be oblivious to its importance, although it is really vital. A good instance of this appears in Stuckenberg's *Sociology—The Science of Human Society*. He correctly declares that the essential concept of sociology is “the genesis of society from individuals.”³ Society is the genus, and “of this genus all existing societies are species or differentiations. Thus under

³ P. iv.

the genus society we have such species as the family, the church, the state, each of which contains a large number of specific or concrete societies."⁴ A little later on he notes that "the 'endless multiplicity' of society is perplexing, and there is a strong temptation to make the state the unity of which the multiplicity is but a differentiation or at least an integral part of the state."⁵ Here is a hypothesis diametrically opposed to the sociological hypothesis. It proposes as the true causal order, not that humanity creates the state, as sociology holds, but that the state creates humanity. But there is no suggestion as to any need of investigation to decide which hypothesis is sound. Stuckenberg dismisses the matter by remarking: "But since society existed before the state, and since all that now exists cannot be claimed as political, we are obliged to look for another bond of union than that of the state in order to interpret non-political associations."

But did human society exist before the state? Mr. Stuckenberg's statement begs this important question, and the logic of his comment amounts to this: the political hypothesis cannot be accepted because it is incompatible with the sociological hypothesis and the sociological hypothesis is manifestly true. In the same way we find Professor Ellwood remarking: "It would seem to be plain without argument, then, that the state is but one of many forms of association with which sociology may deal." Indeed, it seems almost impossible to get a sociologist to consider the possibility that the truth may be just the other way from what he supposes; that, instead of the genesis of society from individuals, what has taken place is the genesis of individuals from society; that man did not make the state but the state made man and that it is an institution that existed before the human species was formed and was the instrument by which the human species was developed; that the state and government are not the same thing, but that government is simply particular structure arising within the state; and that the state includes society just as any entity includes all its parts. Such notions as

⁴ *Loc. cit.*, p. 9.

⁵ *Loc. cit.*, p. 20.

these are not refuted or rejected; they are simply ignored. That the fundamental concept of sociology should be fallacious seems as incredible as was at one time the statement that the earth is really round and not flat, despite the testimony of common-sense.

II

At times Professor Small uses language which seems to imply that sociology as a term connotes nothing more than the application of the methods of positive science to the interpretation of human nature and its institutions. It would follow that if sociology were discarded in favor of a system of quite different terminology that would be "sociology in everything but name." I am unable to recognize any scientific quality in such a statement. It reminds me of the reasons (in Thackeray's *Pendennis*) which Captain Shandon gave for naming his new paper the *Pall Mall Gazette*: "Because everything must have a name. My dog Ponto has got a name." If the term sociology is not a mere appellation that may be applied indifferently to any methodological scheme, according to one's taste and fancy, I submit that it must be taken to be related to its etymology and that it connotes the hypothesis that institutional development is to be construed in terms of association among individuals. It postulates the existence of human beings and proposes to account for the associations they form. As Professor Small puts the case in his *General Sociology*, the subject-matter of sociology is "the process of human association." This statement is cited with approval by Professor Ellwood, who goes on to remark that despite the great variety of sociological investigation, "the object of the sociologist's attention is always *the associational process*, that is, the psychical interactions of individuals."⁶ The italics are Professor Ellwood's own.

When I criticize sociology, I desire to be understood as criticizing this hypothesis. Nothing is farther from my thought than any notion of antagonizing "the natural-science view of human society," or of resisting scientific effort "for obtaining an all-sided comprehensive view of the social life as opposed to

⁶ *Am. Jour. of Sociol.*, XIII, 311.

fractional or one-sided views.”⁷ On the contrary, the reason why I turned against sociology after long study was that it seemed to me to stand in the way of the attainment of just those objects; that it was essentially a false start, from which scholarship would have to withdraw before a true start could be made. It seems to me that the great extent to which American scholarship has been committed to this false start, as compared with the European situation, is a misfortune whose consequences are apparent when what passes in this country for thinking on political and social problems is compared with discussion by European publicists. I attribute this to the vast influence which Herbert Spencer’s writings acquired in this country. Owing chiefly to the energetic exploitation of a New York publishing house he had “a boom” in this country such as he never had in his own and we accepted his views in a spirit of colonial deference. Our intellectuals have been parroting his phrases ever since, and his methodology rests on our thinking like a colossus of lead. Although the flaws of his logic are too abundant to escape the notice even of his disciples, and the inadequacy of his categories is now admitted, yet his concept of the individual as a monad still survives and it gives to sociology its characteristic point of view. Toward the last he arrived at opinions that cut the ground from under his own and all other systems of sociology, but he does not seem to have appreciated their logical significance. In his *Data of Ethics* he defines the state as “society in its corporate capacity.”⁸ The definition is given, parenthetically, in discussing social rights and duties and the subject is not pursued. Nevertheless, it is revolutionary in its effect on his system. If the state is the corpus, whereof society is the structure, then what becomes of the right of the individual to ignore the state, on which he formerly insisted? It is as logically absurd as that a bird should ignore air; or a fish, water. And if the state is the corpus, we must look to its ontogeny for the explanation of its structure and the nature of its unit life. That is to say, he here abruptly forsakes the sociological hypothesis for the political hypothesis as a methodological concept.

⁷ *Loc. cit.*, XV, 109.

⁸ Part IV, “Justice,” pp. 186, 221.

III

There is only one way of settling the methodological issue. We must adopt the natural-science view of human society, and scrutinize the human species just as we should any other species. Upon this point I proposed recourse to Darwin's observations. In his reply Professor Ellwood remarks that I seem to be unaware that Darwinian theories "have recently been shaken to their foundations, and that a theory of society built upon them may be no more secure than other theories." I am not unaware of the tenor of discussion on Darwinism, but I do not find that its foundations have been shaken by the controversy as to the respective value of different selective factors. The mutability of species and the operation of selective process are the essential principles of Darwinism, and these seem to me to be fully verified theories, entitled to general acceptance. Apparently Professor Small does not concur with Professor Ellwood in the notion that Darwinism has been shaken. Otherwise he would hardly say as he does that "all our thinking is affected by Darwin." If he thought that it ought not to be, it is to be inferred that he would have added some qualifying remark. At the same time I must concede that Professor Ellwood is logically consistent. If Darwin's views of the descent of man are sound, the fundamental concept of sociology is illusory; if Darwin is wrong, then the alternative is the acceptance of the sociological hypothesis. On this point, Professor Lester F. Ward occupies a perfectly consistent position. He sees that the theory of human origins advanced by Aristotle and corroborated by Darwin is incompatible with the sociological hypothesis, and he expressly rejects their views. Professor Ward's opinions on government and individual liberty are derived in strict logical sequence from his premises. I think his opinions are wrong, but I do not find any fallacy in his argument. It can be refuted only by discrediting his premises.

As in this article I am meeting sociology on the methodological plane, I shall not undertake to argue the point whether the Darwinian theory of the descent of man is true or false, but shall confine myself to a statement of the methodological im-

portance of the issue. The selective process by which specific types of life are formed from life-stuff on this planet, may operate on individual units directly; or it may operate indirectly through the medium of communities upon which the selective process acts, conditioning the activities of the unit life of the community by the incidental stresses; or it may operate partly in one way and partly in the other. Among all gregarious beings—animal packs, bird rookeries, insect swarms, schools of fish—the individual incidence of the selective process is doubtless modified by the habit of communal life, but the community is so intermittent and incoherent that its influence is comparatively feeble as a condition molding individual structure. There are, however, beings whose life-principle is developed under conditions of established collectivism. There are concrete forms of this permanent community—such as corals and sponges; there are discrete forms—such as numerous species of ants, bees, and wasps generally designated as the social insects. In the case of individual units belonging to this order of beings it is conceded that their structure has been shaped by their functional activities as members of the community and that they have organs and organic proclivities which cannot be interpreted on the principle of individual advantage, but only from the point of view of the advantage of the community.

Now, in adopting "the natural-science view of human society" the first thing to be determined is to which order of life we must assign the human species: (1) to that in which the selective process operates directly in the formation of the individual, or (2) to that in which the selective process operates directly upon the community, which serves as the matrix of the individual and fashions his structure, under the stresses transmitted by it, in the course of its own evolution. Darwin gives reasons for regarding the human species as animals belonging to the second category. He mentions the non-gregarious gorilla as a typical animal of the class which has developed on lines of individual competency. In "the natural-science view" the gorilla stands to the human animal in about the same relation as the solitary bee does to the community bee. They have a generic

pattern in common but a specific differentiation has taken place, marked in the community bee by certain distinctive organs and organic proclivities, which he owes to his place and function in the hive as a member of the community. The solitary bee is a monad; the community bee is a particle, and he attains his special individuality by the very fact that he is not a monad but a particle. If Darwin is right, man is man and not a simian brute because he has been formed not as an individualistic monad, but as a community particle. It follows that the attempt must needs be futile to interpret human nature and its institutions as a study in the groupings of monads; the clue must be sought in the transformations of the community that is the matrix of the human nature. If man is a monad, the sociological hypothesis is correct; that is the proper starting-point in interpreting human life and destiny; there is then a solid basis for a science of association. If man is a community particle, then the proper subject-matter for a science dealing with his nature and proclivities, is the whole of which he is a part—that is to say, the state. The starting-point is then Aristotle's famous affirmation: "It is clearly evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. The state is by nature clearly prior to the family and the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part."

IV

I am well aware that the Aristotle-Darwin theory of human origins is accepted by many sociologists. My point is that they fail to appreciate its methodological importance. Professor Giddings is a good example of this class of sociologists. He remarks: "There is hardly a single fact in the whole range of sociological knowledge that does not support the conclusion that the race was social before it was human, and that its social qualities were the chief means of developing its human nature."⁹ Omitting the word "sociological" I accept this statement as correct. A proper inference would be that the individual of the human species is not an original but a derivative factor in the

⁹ *Elements of Sociology*, p. 232.

formation of institutions, and that we can interpret the individual only by the history of his institutional framework. Hence the state and not the individual is the starting-point, and is the necessary basis of a sound methodology. But Professor Giddings does not seem to attach more than an antiquarian interest to the statement and he bases his own sociological method upon the fact of like-mindedness. That is a characteristic of all species, and it is impossible to predicate anything from it as regards the behavior of a particular species. Animals belonging to the same species are like-minded, just as they are like-headed, like-bellied, like-limbed. The like-mindedness is involved in the agreement of characteristics upon which specific classification is based. Gorillas are like-minded, as well as human beings, but gorillas are like-minded in favor of solitary habits while human beings are like-minded in favor of habitual association under certain conditions. The mere fact of like-mindedness has no determinative value whatever as regards the relations of individuals. Even as regards the human species it supplies no criterion as to conditions of association. Certain groups of individuals meet. In a particular case the encounter is followed by furious fighting; in another it is followed by a joyous carouse. To say that they are all like-minded, or are all *socii*, explains nothing. But if we learn that in the one case a party of Muscovites encountered a raiding party of Turcomans, and in the other case they met an allied party of Muscovites, the situation in each instance becomes at once intelligible, for the characteristics of their behavior are referable to the history and interests of the states to which the groups of individuals respectively belong.

Sociologists have continually to resort to the political hypothesis to explain historic facts, upon which the sociological hypothesis takes no hold whatever, and they may possibly contend that the scope of sociology gives them the right to use any hypothesis at their convenience. This implies that they may ignore logical consistency. They cannot claim that privilege and at the same time set up any claim to scientific rank for their specialty. The political hypothesis and the sociological hypothesis are logically incompatible. The major premise of the one

negatives the major premise of the other. Conclusions drawn logically from the one controvert conclusions drawn logically from the other, with trenchant importance throughout the whole field of politics and ethics.

In the following tabulated statement I give the sociological hypothesis exactly as framed by Professor Ellwood, and I give my own formulation of the political hypothesis in a parallel column:

SOCIOLOGY	POLITICS
GENUS: SOCIETY	GENUS: THE STATE
<i>Units of Investigation</i>	<i>Units of Investigation</i>
1. The <i>socius</i> , or associated individual, the member of society, the unit out of which all the simpler social groups are composed.	1. The <i>state</i> , an integration that took place in the animal stock ancestral to the human species. All existing forms of the state have been evolved from primordial forms existing anterior to the formation of the human species. The state is the unit, of which all social structure and individual human existence are the differentiation. The state is essentially a psychic unity and it is apprehensible only as it is objectified in institutions.
2. The <i>group</i> of associated individuals, whether the groups are natural, genetic groups, or artificial, functioning groups.	2. The <i>institution</i> , or particular structure formed within the state by processes of adaptive change in effecting adjustment to the environment. Such processes have been attended by variation of state species.
3. The <i>institution</i> , which we may define as a grouping or relation of individuals that is accepted, usually expressly sanctioned, by a society. ¹⁰	3. The <i>individual</i> , or the particular unit life of state species, varying in characteristics according to the specific matrix.

The mutually exclusive character of these hypotheses will appear as soon as they are applied to the interpretation of rights. If we adopt the sociological hypothesis we must admit the existence of natural rights. The logical framework of Rousseauism was supplied by Montesqueu. In his chapter on the "Laws of

¹⁰ "Sociology: Its Problems and Its Relations," *Am. Jour. of Sociol.*, XIII, 311.

Nature" he remarks: "In order to have a perfect knowledge of these laws, we must consider man before the establishment of society; the laws received in such a state would be those of nature."¹¹ The distinctions drawn by the school of Rousseau between natural and civil rights, and the doctrine of the inalienable nature of natural rights, follow by strict logical inference. Even such unflinching applications of the theory of individual rights as are made by the *Indian Sociologist* in its defense of political assassination, or by its disciple, the Punjabi student who recently murdered Sir Curzon Wylie as an act of private war against the English government, cannot be regarded as logically fallacious.

The political hypothesis rests upon a radically different assumption. Denying that man existed before society it starts with the existence of the state. Man is born man because he is born a political animal. Hence man's rights are not natural rights but are political rights. They are created, established, and protected by the state (which must not be confused with government regulative structure formed within the state). As an individual animal, man has no more rights than any other animal; that is to say, he has as such no rights at all in the proper sense of the word, but simply powers and capacities. *Right* implies correspondence to some norm or standard apprehended by the individual; this norm or standard inheres in the political matrix that molds the individual nature. The sense of individual freedom is that which accompanies proper functional opportunity and provision of that can only be supplied through the mode in which the life of the state settles itself. Human liberty implies harmonious adjustments of public order, in which the individual occupies the position of an atom vibrating freely in a fixed orbit.

V

Only one point now remains for consideration, namely, the claim on which both Professors Small and Ellwood lay such emphasis, that sociology is the only system that has the merit of attacking problems of social order "by the new methods of positive science." The claim is not sustained by the evidence.

¹¹ *Spirit of the Laws*, Book I, chap. ii.

Historians, political economists, and political scientists are well aware of the methodological problems raised by "the natural-science view of human society," and are working on them. The presidential address of Professor George Burton Adams at the last annual meeting of the American Historical Association, dealt with this subject from the historian's standpoint.¹² Professor Small himself has given citations, illustrating the activity of the political economists in dealing with such problems. As regards the attitude of political science, I submit the following extracts from a paper of my own, read before the American Political Science Association at its annual meeting in 1905:

As at present constituted, political science is incapable of being correlated with statesmanship as the source of the principles that guide and support the art of government. To occupy such a relation it must take for its subject-matter the nature of public authority whatever forms it may assume, elucidating their genetic order and formulating the laws of their growth and development. It must detach its abstract terms from the historical accidents of their origin and provide itself with a systematic terminology of definite significance. In fine, political science cannot be held to be constituted as such until it is put upon an objective basis. It must experience the reconstruction which the general body of science has undergone at the hands of inductive philosophy, and take its place in orderly connection with natural history.

That politics have a natural history is implied by the accepted theory of the descent of man, but while the philosophical interest of the principle may be admitted it may be questioned whether it is practically possible to provide a scheme of classification for political science in accord with it. However great the difficulty may be, there seems to be no escape from it if political science is ever to be placed upon an objective basis, for the cardinal principle of that theory is that the development of humanity is but one phase of a process of development governed throughout by the same general laws, and hence it is impossible that we can understand any part of this process except in orderly relation to the whole process.

As to the possibility of defining the scope of political science in accord with this principle, it may be remarked that the idea has already been distinctly expressed. A theory which regards the state not only as permanent and universal in the abstract but develops the idea with logical consistency in its historical application, was propounded in 1885 by Sir John Robert Seeley in lectures at Cambridge University. They were edited by

¹² *American Historical Review*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, January, 1909.

Professor Sidgwick and published in 1896 under the title *Introduction to Political Science*. Pointing out that political science now concerns itself only with civilized states, excluding from consideration the wild and confused associations in which savages and barbarians may seem to live, Professor Seeley remarked: "An inductive system of political science must begin by putting aside as irrelevant the distinction of barbarous and civilized, and by admitting to an impartial consideration all political aggregates, all societies held together by the principle of government. We must distinguish and arrange the various kinds of the state in the same purely observant spirit which a Linnaeus brought to plants or a Cuvier to animals. We can no longer think of excluding any state because we do not like it, any more than a naturalist would have a right to exclude plants under the contemptuous name of weeds, or animals under the name of vermin." Referring to the fact that in the animal kingdom, the greater number among the large classifications are assigned to strange organisms in which the vital principle is developed in such a manner that the being has little external resemblance to what is popularly called an animal, Professor Seeley said that if political entities were studied by the same method, "It would not be surprising if all the states described by Aristotle, and all the states of Europe into the bargain, should yield but a small proportion of the whole number of varieties, while those states less familiar to us, and which our manuals are apt to pass over in silence as barbarous, yielded a far larger number."¹³

The query is pertinent, why more progress has not been made in formulating this methodological concept. The answer is that there is still vast preliminary work to be done. Professor J. G. Frazer, of Cambridge University, in his *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, puts the case exactly:

In order to make a sound induction large collections of facts are necessary; hence in the inductive sciences it is essential that a period of collection should precede a period of generalization. . . . Now anthropology in general and the history of institutions in particular are still in the collecting stage. The prime want of the study is not so much theories as facts. This is especially true of that branch of the study which treats of origins; for as I have said, most great institutions may be traced back to savagery.¹⁴

Such slow work is in marked contrast to the rapid progress of sociology. That has already produced an elaborate methodological scheme, which makes an imposing appearance, but unfortunately it is not true. It is founded on appearances and not on reality, and all its conclusions are vitiated by the unsoundness

¹³ *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association*, 1905.

¹⁴ Pp. 5, 6.

of its fundamental concept. The proper description of sociology I conceive to be this: it is a pseudo-science, which was produced by hasty, speculative methods of applying natural science to the interpretation of human society, and which possesses a methodological scheme that exhibits logical consistency, but is completely vitiated by the falsity of its premises. The greatest single gain that could be made in scientific progress toward the solution of the problems with which sociology undertakes to deal, would be to get rid of sociology, since it is essentially a false start. Those who yield to its plausible pretensions go astray.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Professor Ford's confession that he prefers obscurity in the company of Oxford and Cambridge to unbiased search for the light, is not the only proof in his paper that there is no common ground for argument between him and the sociologists. His contention amounts first to the claim that a knowledge problem must be solved before work upon it can have scientific value. That is, a generalization must have been reached which may serve as an *a priori* to explain all the phenomena. This flatly rules inductive processes out of the pale of science. It puts dogmatism in place of research by test of all possible hypotheses. According to Professor Ford, therefore, all the science in existence has come into being by an unscientific process.

In the second place, Professor Ford demands acceptance of the *a priori* that *the state existed before the individual*. This is like denying scientific value to biology until it solves the riddle of the priority of chick or egg, and deduces the details of biological knowledge from that *a priori*. Inasmuch as we have not discovered the missing link, and do not know its habitat and its habits, we should be somewhat premature, whether we called ourselves sociologists or anything else, in being as sure as Professor Ford is about things which nobody knows. What we do know is that wherever human experience has been observed one of its elements has been an incessant reciprocating process between individuals and their groupings. The sociologists are trying to do for this process precisely what the physicists are now trying to do for radio-activity. That is, they are testing every possible hypothesis which may help to explain what it is, and how it is, and why it is.

A. W. S.